

SPECIAL SPORTING SECTION



Gloom In Dallas Over Baseball: Trouble Over Umpires In Texas League: Texas Stars In the East

By Horace H. Shelton

There is gloom in Dallas so thick that it could be cut with a knife, and desperate misery in Waco. This is all due to the very poor showing made by both teams in the Texas Baseball league. Little was expected of Waco and therefore the disappointment is not so great. A pennant winner was expected of Dallas and as a result of the race it is making for the cellar championship there is great waiting along the banks of the Trinity.

And the team's slump does not seem to be due to lack of effort or generalship on the part of Gardner or Maloney. Money has been spent freely for player after player. The men now on the team are getting as good treatment and as good salaries as any team in the league and there is no reason why the team should not be making a better showing.

"Hard luck" is always the cry of the defeated team, but in the case of Dallas it looks like there was merit to the contention. A "hoodoo" has been perched on the banner of the team all the year and it seems just impossible for the aggregation to win.

Unless something is done within the near future the team is soon going to be so far behind that there will be no hope for it to grip the top of the ladder any more this season.

The real feature of the league now is the splendid showing of Fort Worth and Oklahoma City. The former especially has had a reversal of form and worked itself from near the bottom to the first division. The "cats" has had the individual members to make it a winner all the time, but

Morris seemed to be lacking in the proper generalship. Recently he took the bit between his teeth and has been reading the aggregation the riot act. The result has been that the team is winning with a surprising regularity and the Fort Worth fans are beginning to dream of a pennant floating over the home grounds next season.

In order to get into proper form it became necessary for Dale Gear to raid the Muskogee team, of the Western association of nearly all its good players, but since he has begun to win the howl that is going up from that league is not worrying him in the least.

Houston and San Antonio are still having a nip and tuck fight for first place. The Bronchos are playing an exceptionally steady game. The team undoubtedly has the strongest pitching staff in the league and if the batters get to hitting behind the twirlers in the way they should it is going to be a walkway for the Bronchos for the pennant, even the mighty Buffaloes not being able to stop them. Ables, Billard and Blanding are the topnotch pitchers of the league, and Feeny and French are doing fair average work.

But pitching can't win games and San Antonio is fortunate in having such heavy sluggers as Sinton, Firestone, Melver, Hornbush and Alexander to break up a game after a pitcher has kept the opposing side from getting a lead. Those four men have been hitting constantly and growing better all the time. But the middle of July

they will be swinging the willow in grand shape and then will come the time when all the other teams in the league had better keep their weather eye out.

Houston has not yet got its regular lineup to work. When the team is shut off its crimples and the men are playing regularly there is no telling just what kind of a game the aggregation will put up as it has been able to keep at the top of the heap through all sorts of vicissitudes.

Hill's suspension is off and he is playing again. The same is true of Salms. Truesdale is coming and just as soon as the catching staff is out of the hospital the fans will have an adequate opportunity to size up just how strong the Buffaloes really are.

The team is a little weak in the pitching staff and but for the heavy slugger the team would have been much lower in the percentage column. All of which goes to show that batters are what win the game after all is said and done. Houston is fortunate in having almost every man on the team a heavy hitter and a hitter in pinches. The scrap between that team and San Antonio promises to be exceptionally interesting during the next few weeks, for at present there are no indications that they will have any serious rivals for the top of the ladder before the first of August.

Despite the fact that it is costing the Texas Baseball league an even \$1000 a month for the services of four umpires, the league is certainly lacking in the possession of competent men.

In the early days of the league the indicator holders got only \$100 a month. Now he gets \$250 and his expenses from place to place as well.

While that is no fancy salary for a competent umpire in a major league company, yet it is as good as is paid in most class B leagues, and Texas certainly ought to have more competent men.

Since the beginning of the league season there has been a constant change of umpires. Altogether ten men have been on the staff of president Allen. The staff at the outset was built up of Matthews, Westervelt, Bush and Jeffries. In addition Page, Bligh, Weighing, Flynn, Curtis and Dunlay have worked.

Bush left after a short stay. No doubt he could not get along with some of the managers, who made it warm for him, but to the fans he looked like one of the best umpires who ever handled an indicator. Westervelt resigned because he did not care to work any longer with president Allen, saying that official did not keep the players suspended after he announced his suspension. He is now with the Virginia state league.

"Piggy" Page, who, by the way, managed the San Antonio team for one season, left the service of president Allen to become manager of the Southwest Texas league. Working umpired two or three games and was ordered to San Antonio. He disappeared en route and the league lost another umpire. Curtis and Dunlay only filled in for a short interval. Bligh has been umpiring but a short time now and it looks as if he had the material in him to make good. His work so far has been both clever and satisfactory.

Despite attacks with shoes and fists one Flynn is still on the job. He gave such a good account of himself when attacked by the Fort Worth players that others will probably be a little slow about jumping him. He has won the respect of the players and it is generally hoped that he will make good.

Zach Davis Wheat and Louis Drucke, known as the "Pride of the Brazos Valley," both graduates of the Texas Baseball league, are this year the sensations of the big leagues. They are touted as men who will replace in the popular mind such men as Wagner, Cobb and Lajoie when age causes those great heroes of the diamond to pass away.

Wheat is with Brooklyn and Drucke with New York. The former is an outfielder and the latter a pitcher. Add to these two Speaker, an outfielder of the Boston team, who is also from the Texas league, and you have grouped the three greatest minor league finds of over 20 years.

These men have already been tried long enough to show that they have made good. The praise is not the extravagant kind that comes along in the spring training season, but is the opinion of expert judges of players after the men have been in enough games and in enough hard places to prove their worth under any and all circumstances.

Wheat, the clever Brooklyn outfielder, broke into professional baseball in the spring of 1908 with the

Shreveport club of the Texas league. He was less than 20 years old—this batting star of the Superbas. He was playing independent ball with the Enterprise, Kan., club and his fielding at first base was rotten, but he could clout the ball some. He was called to Shreveport to be given a trial. He had as his rival for the first sack Gandil, now first baseman for the Chicago White Sox. As a first sacker there was no comparison between the two men and Gandil easily won out. Because he was hitting the ball so hard and so often Wheat was given a place in the outer garden.

In that position Wheat chased the balls hard. He missed them oftener than he caught them, but Dale Gear had patience and he finally got the Kansas boy trained to the point that he could land nearly everything that came his way.

During that summer of 1908 Wheat had his left arm broken by a pitched ball and was out of the game for more than a month, but watched the players from the bench. He had been playing right field. Along about August Gear needed a pitcher badly and traded Wheat to Mobile for a twirler.

Wheat made good there and was purchased by Brooklyn. His work this year, both in the outfield and at the stick, has been about the best in the big league. He looks like a \$10,000 man next year.

Wheat was born in Hannibal, Mo., and has Indian blood in his veins. His mother was from the Cherokee tribe. In the winter Wheat lives on a farm in Kansas. He is a right handed thrower but a left handed batter.

Little more than a year ago Drucke was a college boy. He might be said to have stepped from the college door to the major leagues, as his major league experience was very brief. He graduated from the Texas Christian university at Waco last June and immediately joined the Dallas team. Drucke pitched twice a week and lost only two or three games. He was soon shown to be the best twirler in the Texas league.

McGraw closed a deal for the purchase of Drucke last July. The price was \$2000. But Drucke's real experience with the New York Giants dates from the spring training in Texas in 1908. The Giants played 34 exhibition games in that year and were beaten only once and Drucke, then a green college pitcher, turned the trick. The battery on that day was the aforementioned Drucke and his brother, Oscar, who caught for him. The latter is now a member of the Oklahoma team.

This little exhibition caused McGraw to keep his eye on Drucke and just as soon as he came to the conclusion that he was ripe enough he reached out and took him from the Texas league. Drucke is now pitching regularly and has this season beat the fastest teams in the National league.

While the pictures of the two men mentioned are probably appearing in print oftener than that of Speaker, the latter's record with the Boston team is equal to that of the latter two. He is awaiting the ball about as hard as Wheat and is doing even a little better fielding. He is in every game from start to finish and it is his stick work at critical periods that is doing so much to bring Boston to the front this season. He has been in the National league for two seasons. He is also one of the graduates to be turned out by Dale Gear, of Shreveport, who is making a record as a developer of stars.

In that connection it might be well to remark that another former Shreveport man, Elmer Reiger, who is twirling for the St. Louis Cardinals, is also making good in the National league. He is one of the best men that Roger Bresnahan has and his good work in the box has done as much as any one thing to bring the Cardinals out of the cellar and put them on the road in the sensation race they are now making in the National league.

President Doherty, of the Sand Crabs, is traveling around the circuit with that team. So far he has not proved that he was an efficient charm against defeat.

Jackson is now playing first for Dallas, Heine Maag being temporarily disabled on account of crippled fingers.

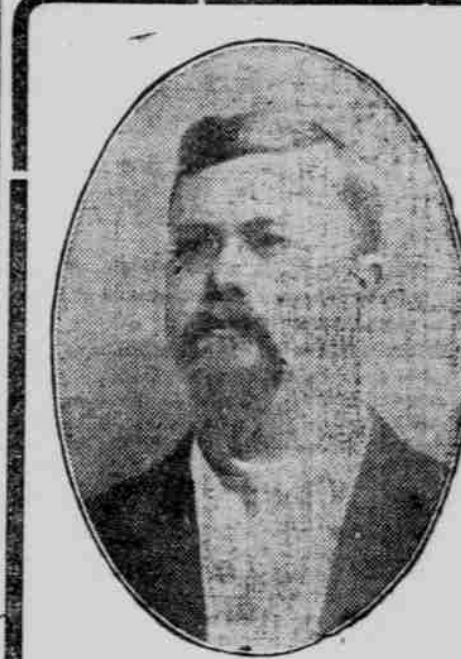
That boy Hise is going some for Galveston. If he keeps the present gait up he will soon be one of the league's top notchers.

Drucke, the Texas twirler with New York, was not altogether to blame for his most recent defeat. New York had a lead of two runs, but in the ninth Drucke gave two bases on balls and was withdrawn. Bugs Raymond went in and hit Campbell and Hyatt in succession. Two safe hits then gave Pittsburgh the game.

Wetzel, of the Galveston team was unable to accompany them on account of sickness. He will be out of the game for several days, yet.

Hornsby continues to do excellent twirling for the Houston aggregation. He is getting better with every game twirled and promises to do much towards keeping the team at the top of the heap.

Andy Coakley, well known to Texas



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Andy Coakley, well known to Texas

fans on account of his work with Chicago and Cincinnati, has been signed by the Louisville team.

Bill Graham, who went from the Texas league to Chattanooga of the Southern league by way of the St. Louis Browns, seems encouraged by the trade and may be able to stick in that league. He is living up to his reputation as a pinch hitter. That is what kept him in the St. Louis team as long as he was.

Harry Ables is still off on court business. San Antonio had better sent

out a delegatin to bring him in after that exhibition made by Billard and Feeny on Wednesday.

Fred Teaney, who was unconditionally released by the New York Giants this spring, is playing first base for the Lowell team in the New England league. He's making good.

Despite the fact that San Antonio has a staff of seven pitchers, more than the team ever had before, it is short handed. Blanding has a bad shoulder, French is being used in the outfield, and Ables is away.

Orlon, the San Antonio boy who went to the Victoria team of the Southwest Texas league, is laid up with a bad knee.

Arthur Fletcher is breaking into the New York infield playing short and second very frequently. He is doing good work and hitting above the average.

At this time last year the standing of the Texas league teams was as follows: Houston, San Antonio, Shreveport, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Galveston, Fort Worth and Waco. It will be seen that there is relatively little change and it is all a guess as to who will win the rag.

Poor old Waco. The Dallas castoffs seem gone beyond hope. Unless the team picks up in playing there is a likelihood of it dropping out of the league before the season is over. The only reason that it will not is that Waco has grown used to supporting a losing team.

Rogers, the newest addition to the Bronchos pitching staff, comes from Atlanta. This may mean that the Southern league will recall Griffin. If Rogers is to do as well as the latter he will have done some fairly good twirling.

Ledy is a little off color in his health and he is not working hard with San Antonio. With the showing he is

(Continued on Page 24.)

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